

February 3, 2010

Mr. Rock,

Members of the same U of O "Protection" force that yesterday facilitated an illegal police intrusion into the Student Appeals Centre (SAC) office and the violent arrests of student Marc Kelly and SFUO President Seamus Wolfe came uninvited and disrupted the student-organized Chalking Day event at the Morisset cement poster backing walls.

Please back off Mr. Rock.

There was absolutely no "Protection" need that required a muscular intervention and disruption of our event. Student participants were harassed by Protection agents and their pictures were taken without their permission.

Despite your unfortunate intervention, the event was a success. Over 30 students contributed to filling the backing walls with colourful political messages of all types. We recommend that you read these messages Mr. Rock.

The "Protection" officers displayed disturbing unprofessional behaviour. They openly threatened the ludicrous criminal charge of "damaging University property" but then proceeded to watch and not even warn most students who contributed to the chalking. They threatened criminal charges backed by their photos but did not intervene or call Ottawa Police to stop the alleged dreadful "damage to property".

Political and informative messages in chalk on a campus wall is not a criminal offence. Drop the guns and handcuffs, Mr. Rock. Send your "Protection" agents to actually protect. For example, they could protect freedom of expression.

We ask you not to remove any of the student participants' messages, and to respect Chalking Day. The "Protection" officers did explain your logic of hiring an expensive removal crew in order to demonstrate "damage" and assign it a monetary value, but don't go there Mr. Rock. Don't go there. Don't spend our tuition money to remove our free expression. Your officers and lawyers have better things to do.

Consider instead adding your own message to the wall, about one of your human rights projects in Africa, say.

Also, we welcome your suggestions about parts of the chalking that could be removed. In this case we would do ourselves (using water and a brush).

Sincerely,

Student Chalkers of the University of Ottawa (SCUO)

Joseph Hickey
Mireille Gervais
Liam Kennedy-Slaney

supported by:
Anne-Marie Dubois
Adam Hendren
Robyn Daiglesh

cc: Claude J. Giroux, Director of Protection Services
cc: media